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MIDSUMMER IDYLLS

AND

OTHER POEMS

LENNOX AMOTT

00087156X

MIDSUMMER IDYLLS

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

LENNOX R. P. C. AMOTT.

"Oh! blame not the bard, if he fly to the bowers
Where Pleasure lies, carelessly smiling at Fame."

Moore.

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TO

ARCHIBALD ROUGH

THIS TRIFLE

IS INSCRIBED

AS A TOKEN OF ADMIRATION

BY HIS

FRIEND AND BROTHER

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

ENCOURAGED by the pen of toleration and emboldened by the kindly smile of indulgence, is it unnatural that I should, for the second time, present myself before public scrutiny; I, who have but lightly quaffed Hippocrene's wave and contented myself with lingering affectionately in the precincts of the Empyrean Parnassus? Under which circumstances my readers will, I trust, feel the more disposed to forget the weaknesses of my strain, and pity the rhymer.

But I am no aspirant to poetic bays, and only beg to apologize for having sneaked on to holy ground unobserved. I would proffer those my best thanks who were pleased to countenance my *Juvenilia*, and assure them that I was no less gratified than honoured by their observations.

Having, then, represented this little volume in its proper light, and begged those who do me the favour of perusal to exercise as much lenity as their patience will permit them, I wish them a very good morning, and make my bow.

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MIDSUMMER IDYLLS.

CANTO I.

I.

It was the time of year when cockneys fly
From town to country, and from there to town.
I am not sure, but think it was July;
I would not swear it was, nor bet a crown,
When, as I told you, cockneys hurry down
In two hours' railway journey far away,
And rush to places of immense renown,
Bright with the thoughts of coming holiday,
Full well determined to enjoy it while they may.

II.

They were the days when all who care to wander
O'er the rude mountain or the fertile plain,
Must snatch the chance, and rush here, there and yonder,
And pack their baggage off by early train,
To rest the busy over-anxious brain,
And take to interests altogether new.
Some tear to Italy, and some to Spain,
For beneficial air and change of view;
What everybody does that I must also do.

III.

The sun was scorching, and the streets were dusty,—
Suburban roadways generally are,—
And everything seemed disagreeably "fusty,"
Merely because there was no watering car.
It was the weather when we feel at war
With all around and every one we meet;
Old dames complained of aches unknown before,
Unused to battle with such dreadful heat,
Such truly fearful spasms, and such blistered feet.

IV.

The 'buses went by clockwork by the appearance;
Th' exalted driver, usually so deft,
Resented, in his doze, the interference
Of any one poor fellow-suff'rer left;
Of all his strength and energy bereft,
The weary horse dragged listlessly along,
And there appeared to be no effort left
In the sleepy trilling of the songster's song,
Which to the small suburban gardens did belong.

V.

Now the slow music of the organ-grinder
Smites the ear feebly at the noon of day,
He doffs his hat, as if for a reminder,
To those who wish him far enough away;
And noisy babes at variance and play
Join in the jangle of the grocery vendor,
And butcher boys have lots and lots to say
To fair domestics, who their hearts surrender
To, if not a butcher boy, a kettle mender.

VI.

But more especially I would direct
Your kind attention, reader, to a square
In that locality, tho' more select,
So thither now together we'll repair.
A bold and lofty tenement stands there
With flight of steps and massive portico,
Where dwell three daughters infinitely fair;
Their age of course I'm not *supposed* to know,
'Twas very rude I own to raise the question so.

VII.

But as you all seem anxious to discover
Their years, their fortune, and the gods know what;
To hear if each or all have found a lover,
If one is married or if all are not;
How many aunts and uncles they have got,
Their nic-nacs of domestic life beside,
Your indignation would be somewhat hot
If th' information were to be denied,
And since you'll have it so, the truth I will not hide.

VIII.

You know most ladies have some slight objection,
Some strange objection which they always raise,
And arm themselves as if for the protection
Of the sweet sanctum of their earlier days,
Toward those who flatteringly speak their praise
And ask in special confidence their years,
Who pass the time in fifty pleasant ways
And designate them "charms" and "pretty dears,"
Beset with all those unimaginable fears!

IX.

But neither of my heroines were wed;
The eldest—fancy—only twenty-two!
At least so all the neighbours' gossip said,
And they, of course, were all who really knew;
Of medium height, and lovely spinsters too,
Charmingly gentle as they well could be,
With accomplishments and graces not a few,
As generous as one could wish to see,
The very pictures of sweet joviality.

X.

A dozen uncles and as many aunts
Were the idols of their precious little eyes;
And it was whispered that there was a chance,
With Fate auspicious, of a great surprise
At some approaching day; 'tis never wise
To form conjectures or to fret and worry,
To count your gains before Aunt Some-one dies,
E'en though possessed of half the land in Surrey,
Or draw your own conclusions in too great a hurry.

XI.

All information, as, perchance, you know,
Is second hand; I write as folks dictate;
A Mrs. B. tells Mr. So-and-So
Th' extent of some-one's personal estate;
He in his turn the same again will prate;
A Mr. C. has struck his little wife
Is the last movement worthy to relate,
'Tis now affirmed he took away her life,
In the next terrace where th' appalling tale is rife.

XII.

'Tis sometimes so, for other people's business
Wise men and women oft forsake their own,
Which may perhaps account for their remissness,
A tittle-tattle's never seen alone;
And by the time the idle tale has flown
From mouth to mouth, the truth in some disguise,
A trifling circumstance we find has grown
A crime of most unpardonable size,
And thunder-struck believers stare in mute surprise.

XIII.

But, sad to say, our friends were looking pale,
Our female friends, at least, I mean to say.
We will not try to penetrate the veil
Which hides domestic mystery away;
It was not often that they looked that way.
Perhaps the atmosphere of such a place
As the metropolis on such a day
Had made them faint, as often is the case
When mad excitement palls in pleasure's breathless race.

XIV.

But still, methinks, it was the want of change
That blanched the buxom beauty of their cheeks,
The want of some secluded, pleasant grange
Away from town, for twelve or thirteen weeks,
The hilarity of right down country freaks
And rambles in the meadows bright and green,
Such as the "pater" usually seeks,
With charming walks and panoramic scene
And velvet-like ascents with verdant vales between.

XV.

'Twas evident the fair ones thought so too,
As they suggested to their fond mamma
A short peregrination, something new,
A rush to country and to town ta-ta,
For benefits obtained but from afar;
So 'twas arranged, when they could choose the hour,
To make a fourfold pounce upon papa,
And use the utmost of persuasive "flour,"
For all such daughters have this undefinéd power.

XVI.

'Twould be as well perhaps to mention here
A fact you all no doubt are sure to know,
'Tis necessary oftentimes to steer
Clear of surrounding difficulties, so
When an especial object lies below
The precision of your kindness and attention,
Snatch the right time (a glance may serve to show
If in a mood for jesting or dissension,
Domestic trials are too numerous to mention).

XVII.

It may be p'raps a trifling *mauvaise humeur*,
Papa may worry o'er his own affairs,
Or it, perchance, may be a downright "fumer,"
And judging from the countenance he wears
He may be vexed with sundry business cares,
A something he would not communicate
In which the happy household never shares,
It is not wise it should, at any rate;
At least till matters have regained their even state.

XVIII.

The morn which followed this determination
Was just such as our damsels did desire,
Now all the world was out for its vacation,
In truth no opportunity was nigher;
All seemed to rise with spirits somewhat higher
Which were at most times jocular and gay,
And all agreed that they should seize their sire
A time befitting on that self-same day,
To coax him gently round to let them have their way.

XIX.

Paterfamilias, in his morning gown
And wool-knit slippers, comfortable and pretty,
To the radiant breakfast table trotted down,
Inclined to have some frolic and be witty,
(As frolicsome as any in the City)
And chaff his daughters in his usual style;
Minutiæ omitted in this ditty,
For to relate 'twould not be worth the while,
I therefore must, my reader, meet you with denial.

XX.

The window,—French they called it, I'm not sure
If such in France are often to be seen,
Not quite a window, but more like a door,
'Twould do for both, whichever one they mean,—
Opened upon a lawn of smiling green,
Which, with a modest rockery behind,
Displayed, in fact, a most enchanting scene
To those who were at all that way inclined,
With such artistic taste was it indeed designed.

XXI.

Then with the arbour's rustic-like assistance,
And nimble Cupid with his bow close by,
The various colours melting in the distance
Lent quite a pleasing aspect to the eye,
And perhaps produced the very faintest sigh
For such-like beauties on a larger scale,
Where sweeping meadows meet the azure sky,
And florid milk-maids bear their bounteous pail,
And breezes waft the sound of winnow and of flail.

XXII.

'Twas here papa did often love to wander,
First in the shade, now in the pleasant sun,
And peep at this and that, and hurry yonder,
To see some potting properly begun;
He strolled to-day, a regular *Big-Gun*,
Around the precincts of his bright domain,
His egg and toast dispatched. (Forgive the pun,
I promise I won't do the same again;
Frivolities like these oft run across the grain.)

XXIII.

Recovered? Yes?—So glad!! Three daughters knitting,
Like three white butterflies upon the breeze
With evidently some design, came skipping
Round by the arbour, in amongst the trees,
And if the truth were really known, to seize
Their innocent papa just thereabout;
'Tis wonderful how daughters coax and tease
At such auspicious times; I have no doubt
They stroked his handsome whiskers with a pretty pout.

XXIV.

(*No.* 1 *Daughter.*) "Papa dear, don't you find the heat
So thoroughly enjoyable you say, [oppressive?
I really think its something quite excessive,
Much worse, in fact, than it was yesterday;
It quite upsets me;—no, I'm not in play,
Indeed I've been quite indisposed of late,
And vexed with ailments many and many a day,
With troublesome *ennui* and *mal-à-tête*,
The Doctor thinks my nerves are in a wretched state!"

XXV.

(*No.* 2 *Daughter.*) "Indeed 'tis so my dearest dear Papa,"
We one and all seem quite to be upset,
'Tis hotter than last summer was by far,
At least so everybody says, but yet
Much hotter than last June it could not be,
And that's what I think, what do you think, pet?
To sit indoors 'tis like a nunnery,
With nought to do but tamely sit and knit,
And I don't like such quietness a bit!"

XXVI.

(*No.* 3 *Daughter.*) " 'Tis my impression that we ought
Away from home, as other people do, [to go
The doctor recommends a change and so
Just think how very nice 'twould be for you;
I'm sure you must be wanting something new,
Away from dusty ledgers, old and brown,
You seem quite tired out sometimes—'tis true,
You really ought to go away from town,
To Hastings or to Deal, and we could all come down.

XXVII.

" Then let us go, Papa dear, I am sure
Such bright enjoyment you can ne'er forbid;
Now say so darling, is it not so, for
You would be very wicked if you did?
'Twould do you good besides in getting rid
Of horrid London and incessant noise."
Here to her father's side his daughter glid,
And kissed his cheek (what girls like from the boys)
Just as a baby loves to fondle all its toys.

XXVIII.

Then quoth the pater: " What you say is right,
Quite right, I know, my pretty little dears."
We fancy here, tho' usually so bright,
Our worthy friend was almost moved to tears:
Perhaps some sad and manifold ideas,
Some sudden anxious thought had filled his eyes,
And since we know not what were all his fears
Of course we really cannot sympathise,
So say philosophers; how nice 'tis to be wise!

XXIX.

There is a proverb, readers all have heard it,
"Events to happen cast their shade before."
You all will see I am obliged to word it
To keep within the limits of the law,
Which you must know is oftentimes a bore.
Our friend proceeded after some delay,
"Let's say the Lakes, the Lizard or Bangor;
But there is time enough to name the day
And make some fine arrangements e'er we start away."

XXX.

We must not enter too much in discussion,
Nor with such tedious topics must we sport
As heads brought into furious concussion,
While frantic kisses, one and every sort,
Made such a noise that the domestics thought
That those above must really be deranged,
Until the cook in the very act was caught
Of list'ning—there! and high words were exchanged;
Perhaps the wily cook knew what had been arranged.

XXXI.

I would not venture even to suppose
She knew that one, at least, must stay behind;
And yet she may have heard it all, who knows?
Cooks *are* so "dormouse" when they have a mind:
But this one looked like nothing of the kind,
In short she was, or seemed to be, a saint,
And when harsh words were spoken, quite resigned,
She took the opportunity to faint.
So much for charming cook and mistress's complaint.

XXXII.

And now of course there was incessant chat
Concerning what to take and where to go,
To see if this arrangement suited that,
Or that arrangement suited so and so;
'Twas well to balance matters thus you know
And settle all before the time arrived,
To milliners and hairdressers to go,
To purchase and have ostrich-plumes revived,
Though not much benefit had they this way derived.

XXXIII.

There was, there naturally would be too
In such a case as this, a long debate;
One said that Yarmouth was *the* place, she knew;
Another said it was by far too late;
And someone else suggested Harrogate;
Another sneered at such a daft suggestion,
For *that* above *all* places she did hate
And Torquay was the best there was no question:
But listeners evidently wanted good digestion.

XXXIV.

"And," quoth the eldest, "there's Llandudno also."
"Why," quoth another, "have you got no sense?"
Mamma, requesting that they shouldn't bawl so,
Pronounced this far too utterly intense.
The eldest charm continued in defence,
Bespoke the Gulf Stream and the balmy air;
Whereon the mater, taking great offence,
Declared she wouldn't *think* of going *there*—
She'd sooner go to Seven Dials, or anywhere.

XXXV.

After which outburst, sweeping through the door,
A flood of tears gushed freely from her eyes,
And, stretched upon the *canapé*, she swore
That she was far too indisposed to rise,
Though afterwards she did, with many sighs—
A smelling-bottle and some small assistance;
Grieved that her daughter to her very eyes
Should offer her such resolute resistance.
From then she essayed to keep the subject at a distance.

XXXVI.

However, after some few days had passed,
With their disputes and matters of vexation,
They came to something definite at last
Without much further tedious altercation;
When each one deemed it her own commendation
That set the point so thoroughly at rest,
And each had come to the determination
The course she had adopted was the best:
A course, perhaps, my reader never would have guessed.

XXXVII.

Ah! would you like to hear? then I will tell.
They had arranged to take a country seat;
Perhaps the choice was happy—very well,
They chose a pretty house and farm complete,
Such as where solitude and pleasure meet,
With everything that comfort could devise,
A smiling garden, sweetly gay and neat,
Old-fashioned, though of most convenient size;
For such as this precisely did they advertise.

XXXVIII.

They did not call it as folks love to do,
In bustling centres of incessant trade,
And leafless acres, though perhaps a few
Pet dandelions blossom in the shade
Where other vegetation will all fade,
And parch to yellow in the smoky court,
Where a solitary sunbeam might have strayed,
And all the gloomy atmosphere is fraught
With all that's dank and filthy of the human sort.

XXXIX.

It is so fashionable now-a-days
To give one's dwelling some fantastic name
To recommend it to the stranger's gaze,
Or afford it an imaginary claim
To more gentility than others; 'tis the same
In the metropolis, for folks arrange
(Flighty mammas, perhaps, are more to blame)
To call their homes "The Beeches" or "The Grange,"
For probably they think 'twill be a little change.

XL.

Genteel villas please the wearied eye
In towns of more than ordinary size,
And quite a second-rate locality,
(But what of that? whatever signifies?)
A five-roomed cottage under the disguise
Of a fine name because it sounds so well;
It is a good address, and he who buys,
Perhaps, has that sole purpose, who can tell?
And finds the new, yet tott'ring structure, is a "sell."

XLI.

Of course I don't condemn it on the gates
Of princely piles of luxury and ease,
Where the powdered footman silently awaits
My lord's commands and wishes, till he sees
What he can do to magnify or please;
Who sternly checks the smile that he would hide,
And reverently bows with straightened knees
When perhaps his lord is pleased to coincide,
And waits for the dismissal from his master's side.

XLII.

Where stately griffins guard by day and night
The pillared pomp of birth and fortune, whence
Reel peals of laughter, where the gasp for might
Palls on the throne of vast magnificence;
Where halls superbly mirrored, every sense,
And every wish, all hope, each separate sigh,
With endless epicurean intents,
Are planned to please, are reared to gratify,
While balmy perfumes float o'er th' marble masonry.

XLIII.

But pardon the allusion; I intended
Merely to mention what is but too true.
I really hope I may not have offended
Any, in short—particularly you,
Submissive reader, to whom thanks are due
For having borne with my caprice so long,
And your forbearance, I hope, you will renew
Until the utmost limit of my song;
Perhaps my hope's presumption, then it would be wrong!

XLIV.

The house of which I spoke to you before
Was Elleston Farm, nursed in a lovely vale,
Within the music of the shingly shore,
And close above full many a snowy sail,
On the blue wave, the wand'rer's eye would hail,
And the cool breeze from off the glist'ring sea,
Would bring soft reminiscence in its trail
Of scenes long past, of childhood's jollity,
And many a soaking ramble on a holiday.

XLV.

I must describe. It was a mansion old;
Across its walls each black yet mossy beam
Gave it the look of years and years untold;
In style it did Elizabethan seem,
And, with its jutting windows, we should deem
It to have been a comf'table repose,
Such as, with th' ruddy sunlight's western gleam
Upon the small-paned casement, and the rose
Above the portal, would dispel all worldly woes.

XLVI.

The chestnut team, the mill pond and the quack
Of ducklings discontented with their lot,
The grunt of pigs itin'rant, and the stack—
All lent a happy charm to such a spot;
There might be seen upon the labourer's cot
The blooming jess'mine loading all the air
With fragrant perfume; and the garden plot
Of many colours, grateful for the care
Bestowed upon it, of delight gave its full share.

XLVII.

The meadows, bright with buttercups and hues
Of ev'ry shade, before the pleasèd eye
Rolled their ripe richness, and the sweeping views,
Such as in Eastern England sweetly lie,
Smiled far away in vast variety,
Tinged with the orange of the sinking sun,
Until the distance melted into sky.
Such scenes are sweet when even has begun,
And rooks are idly cawing, and the day is done.

XLVIII.

O God, teach us to feel what joys are these!
How dear these pleasures momently renewed!
Teach us to humbly fall upon our knees
In speechless praise, in silent gratitude;
These are the hours, O Lord of Solitude,
When hearts in love must upward turn to Thee,
With every comfort, every charm imbued,
And all that's peaceful; when tranquillity
Steals softly o'er the bosom and lulls its rolling sea.

XLIX.

Such scenes are dear, for they have pow'r to allay
Fears of the fearful, troubles of the tried,
To smooth each anxious pain, all griefs, away,
That ceaseless in the human heart abide,
Have power to soothe, to cast cold care aside;
Bid cords of Hope inanimate vibrate,
And insatiate longings of the soul subside,
And curb the stormy passions of the great,
Make earth a heaven, and holiness preponderate.

L.

What is Ambition? what is Pride? and this
That boils the blood and parches all the frame;
That stirs the breast to ecstasies? What bliss,
What bursts of glory in a mighty Name!
But what of these! to me 'tis all the same
Whether a humble cottage or a throne.
What, what to me is Glory? what is Fame?
Give me the woods and let me be alone;
I want no marble bust, I ask no graven stone!

LI.

I err,—but pardon me, I am a fool,
Like some few others that I used to know;
The truth is, I was taught to be at school,
So Precept and Example tend to show.
But never mind, I deem it quite below
The faintest notice of a rusty pen;
'Twill tell my readers what respect I owe,
How very much I thought of people then,
Who should have been exhibited in a cattle-pen.

LII.

I wish them well, of course, but must proceed.
The cook was really to be left behind,
Which doubtless *she* thought very nice indeed.
She was a cook so jolly, yet refined,
Wore bright kid gloves (the colour undefined),
And finery of every sort and hue
(I couldn't tell you if I had a mind),
Like wealthy folks, as servants always do;
And terrible mistakes sometimes embarrass you.

LIII.

The morn was brilliant and the packing done,
And all were in the very liveliest mood,
Although, of course, there was no time for fun,
And jokes were too untimely to be good.
The first cabdriver must have been endued
With strength, for this occasion, from above
He *was* so mighty, and his attitude
Betokened he was instantly in love
With cooky, smiling on her, charming little dove!

LIV.

He quite forgot (although perhaps you doubt it),
With love for cook, what he'd to sup'rintend;
They had two cabs, that's all I know about it,
And, gracious knows, their luggage had no end.
And everybody thought they did intend
To find th' remotest corner of the earth,
Wherever that was. I can't comprehend
Who in the dickens gave such stories birth,
Still of frivolities like these there is no dearth.

LV.

Then servants, too, Pa, Ma, and daughters three,
All drove in madcap hurry to the station,
In fact, they might have tittered "Seven are we"
Had they remembered the superb quotation;
But Julia (housemaid) made some lamentation
Because she'd burst the lacings of her stay
(Oh! what an agonising situation,
A splendid warning for another day).
The cabmen helped them, and asked twice their proper pay.

LVI.

I don't know if they got it. All was right;
Now they were on the very point of starting,
And all was jolly to their hopeful sight,
When Hannah fainted just before departing
(The under-housemaid), who had been imparting
Her notion of the rights and wrongs of things,
And I expect it was the thought of parting,
And having soared with those unruly wings
Of heavenly Pegasus, which always bother brings.

LVII.

Ah! what an object is the railway train,
Machine of wonder, monster of surprise!
Which, while it thunders o'er the trembling plain
In all its majesty of power, defies
All that's before it, and a nation's eyes
Are fixed in awe upon the creature; see
His all-terrific splendour as he flies
From north to south; stupendous mystery,
Shriek on and tell of countless wonders in thy cry!

LVIII.

So like the poet, thy tumultuous breast
Bursts in volcano-like eruption, till,
Unchecked and boundless, with no place of rest,
Thou ragest on, great inexhaustible!
Fierce fiend of dread, sublime and mighty still,
Which naught can satiate, nothing can impede,
Throbbing dragon-like and awful to fulfil
Thy mighty mission with impetuous speed,
Darting like th' shaft along, unwearied, without heed.

LIX.

They had arrived, and all was, out and in,
Superlatively pleasant to behold;
The views themselves were highly int'resting,
As well as all the creatures of the fold
With which they all were pleased, so I am told,
Which was a comfort for their cherished pater,
Who was just then quite worth his weight in gold,
His bed-room full of bank notes; from these data
I must defer the calculations until later.

LX.

They laughed and chatted and explored the house,
With its dark oaken gallery, and flight
Of massy polished stairs, and saw a mouse,
P'raps three or four appalled their wond'ring sight;
But each new comfort gave them fresh delight,
And as they peeped through each dark-curtained door
All seemed so perfectly compact and bright,
Indeed they seemed to like it more and more,
For they had never entered such a house before.

LXI.

The furniture was heavy in its kind,
And all the drap'ry was of sombre shade,
Evidently in days long past designed,
And diamond casements, I before have said,
Looked on a lawn, in richest green arrayed,
And lands beyond unto the distance blue
Where king-cups blossom'd in the silent glade,
And all the flow'rets of the forest grew,
And pearly streams were gladly trickling not a few.

LXII.

Upstairs the rooms were hung with glacé chintz
(So like the good old farm-house of past days),
Which gave them a variety of tints,
And pleased at once the weary stranger's gaze;
The doors themselves were covered with green baize
Hidden with crimson curtains, and each bed
Was draped in style that claimed the greatest praise
In charming sky-blue intermixed with red.
Indeed I almost wish that I'd been there instead.

LXIII.

They fed the pigs with biscuits, and the fowls
Were soon quite reconciled to their new friends,
And the great shepherd-dog's uncivil growls
Had quite subsided and, instead, he sends
His kind regards for various means and ends;
And I expect, if th' real truth were known,
He had an appetite, which always tends
To make uncouth pups civil for a bone;
To use civility in this way some are prone.

LXIV.

Sometimes, like others do, they drove about
With a *recherché* little chaise and pair,
And they enjoyed a pic-nic oft no doubt
In pretty spots now here and sometimes there;
And we all know the fingers of the fair
Arrange these matters sweetly, for they suit
Matters requiring delicacy and care,
The choice of flowers, the arrangement of the fruit,
And digging ferns up without injuring the root.

LXV.

They loved to play at croquet on the lawn,
Adventurously rove a league away,
Or bend their steps upon the summer morn
(A mile it was, I fancy,) to the bay,
And take a biscuit-luncheon on the way,
And wander o'er the shining, yellow sands,
Quiet and lone, to watch the snowy spray;
And take the curious seaweeds in their hands
And then return obedient to Papa's commands.

LXVI.

Yes, those were jolly days; and now the fields
With happy haymakers were scattered o'er,
And Papa went to know their different yields
Through quite a hundred pieces, if not more,
Not less, at any rate, I am quite sure;
And all his daughters had some first-rate fun
(They always had some merriment in store)
And haymaking to learn they had begun,
Beneath the baking heat, too, of a July sun.

LXVII.

In fact it gave them something nice to do,
Moreover 'twas a fav'rite occupation,
And that chanced very fortunately too;
Meanwhile they liked some light confabulation,
Making arrangements for their bright vacation,
And plans far too intricate, I'm afraid,
To enumerate in this uncouth narration,
For if upon such topics here I strayed,
'Twould take from now till doomsday, so it's best unsaid.

LXVIII.

They'd had a call or two from neighbours near
Whose company was jovial as could be;
So their Mamma first started the idea
That they should ask three gentlemen to tea
Out in the hayfield, where they would be free
To help in tossing o'er the scented hay;
Then all assemble underneath the tree,
And chatter anything they'd like to say,
While Julia handed round the tea upon a tray.

LXIX.

All was decided, and a note was sent,
Penned with Mamma's gold pen and sealed with care,
And Julia brought a note to the intent
That they would be most happy to be there;
And whereon everybody did declare
They were the nicest folks beneath the sun,
And Julia did most naturally stare
To hear the happy thing that they had done,
And longed to see arrangements instantly begun.

LXX.

How quiet must the cook have been alone!
Ah no! for she was out upon the spree,
And people say (tho' all to err are prone)
That very cabman sat upon her knee
And "lovey-dovied" her despairingly;
While some assert that she was seen to go
With th' General's groom (but this could never be)
To see the acting in a penny show;
But such a thing would be her dignity below.

LXXI.

But to return. The house seemed upside down
And Julia with it, everywhere at once;
Much worse than when they all were leaving town,
The Mistress called her a "consummate dunce"
(The harshest word she'd used for many months)
Because she couldn't count, and then, of course,
Essaying to weep with many groans and grunts
Until her gentle voice became quite hoarse,
She finished up by giving mistress lots of "sauce."

LXXII.

Next, daughters three received exact directions
How to do all things and go everywhere:
Concerning all their musical selections
And all about the "skirts" they had to wear,
How they should dress and e'en adorn their hair,
What rings to show, whether diamond or not;
Injunctions to observe the greatest care
In choice of stockings, and I don't know what.
(They must have been like fairies in Calypso's grot.)

LXXIII.

Of daughters all they were the most adored
I honestly believe. Mamma impressed
The fact upon them that a certain Lord
Was of *her* family, tho' dispossessed
Of all he had: of course you know the rest,
He had been acting very wrong, you see.
And they should make acquaintance with the best,
For think what claims they had of pedigree!
(Misfortune always lends a grace to dignity.)

LXXIV.

They were to see the maid decant the wines,
They were to give the gentlemen their dues,
They were to be *distinguées* to the nines,
They were, in short, to mind their p's and q's.
Their darling mother never would excuse
A breach of etiquette, however small,
'Twere better far, if e'en they fail'd t' amuse,
To do the honours well or not at all,
No matter when or where, at *any* festival.

LXXV.

In fact, 'twas this my reader, as you see,
For one high-born like her all *must* be right ;
For she was of the aristocracy
And therefore quite expected to her sight
None would present himself, unless the height
Of spotless honour and of gentle birth,
In fewer words—and everything polite.
She was of more than ordinary worth,
One of the noblest from Thanet's Isle to Solway Firth.

LXXVI.

How nice it is to dash about in style
With prancing steeds thro' all the whirling west
Of mighty London, under Fashion's smile,
(Tho' redundant pleasures even can molest)
And feel one's happy self supremely blest,
And bowed to by a "humble flunkey flat,"
With endless formal courtesies oppressed ;
To flirt with Baron this or Lady that,
And mix with all the great, the honoured of the state.

LXXVII.

Roll to the theatre, too. Upon the board
Gaze on the actor—paralyzed and dumb,
Till, like one voice, ten thousand tongues applaud,
From the palpitating auditorium.
See from the boxes all the purses come!
How riveted admirers pause aghast!
Hear the excitement in the stifled hum!
And see the tears of each enthusiast!
Look! ere the actor has before the curtain passed.

LXXVIII.

Turn on the lights! Let the besweated crowds
Shriek as the music swells, now high, now low,
For all to-morrow slumber in their shrouds
Who drained excitement's cup an hour ago!
Watch flitting beauty, nymph-like, come and go,
Fan the scorched cheek and quaff the bright champagne,
Around the circles see the diamond-glow,
Revel in laughter, think no more of pain!
See! see! the blind ascends and all begins again!

LXXIX.

Put up the opera-glass and scan the stage,
On crimson piles luxuriantly recline,
And see the premature decay of age
Transformed to youth, a lovely columbine!
While th' gorgeous tapestries of rare design
In rich profusion hang in heavy fold;
See every pantomimic splendour shine
Like glist'ring starlight, opal, pearl, and gold,
Mirrors reflecting mirrors, countless and untold!

LXXX.

But some folks always spend the night in gaming,
Or very nearly so at any rate,
And other vices hardly worth the naming
(But we, of course, are not immaculate),
Then think of rising very, very late
After a night's debauch and dissipation
And rolling homewards with unsteady gait
(Perhaps 'twas after the red-hot gyration
Of the previous evening). Ours is a sad nation!

LXXXI.

The breakfast lies untasted, for the tea
Is not the nectar-like concoction (such
As accompanies the dice and play-room) he
Is very fond of (for he takes too much),
And therefore home supplies he cannot touch;
In all and everything he is undone,
Lips parch, head whirls, was never such
A wretched plight; indeed he's not A 1.
He thinks he has remaining money but has none.

LXXXII.

But 'tis too bad I know;—again I've erred
And deviated sadly from my tale;
I'm sorry that it should have thus occurred,
I know, and you know too, that I am frail
And everything I've said is very stale,
At least it is to me, I daresay too
To some of you on p'raps a different scale,
Much more familiar, if one only knew.
It is quite marvellous what some can bustle through!

LXXXIII.

The day arrived; the sun was shining brightly
As it was necessary that it should,
The rooms were swept and all that was unsightly
They hid away as quickly as they could;
And then the edibles, both many and good,
Julia and Hannah carried to the spot
(The nearest way was through the primrose-wood)
And then turned homeward with a merry trot,
And waited for the time t' arrive; and who would not?

LXXXIV.

The edibles consisted of a ham,
A vase of clotted cream, two pigeon pies,
Some cakes of every sort, a breast of lamb,
Eggs, bread and butter, as you would surmise,
A calf's head, too, of an enormous size,
Ripe strawberries and currants red they laid
On fresh green leaves (so nice to hungry eyes)
Oporto iced, some "pop" and lemonade;
Besides some other delicacies they had made.

LXXXV.

They, too, supplied some cans of country beer
For the lab'ring men, and half-a-crown apiece
For them to have some downright merry cheer;
The question was—where did their bounty cease?
So fast their acts of kindness did increase,
So welcome were they to the neighb'ring poor
To whom their homely smile was joy and peace,
And to whose cottages they often bore
Some small addition to their little cupboard store.

LXXXVI.

I picture, as I write, the little scene:
The dwelling clustered o'er with roses white,
The parlour with its ruby bricks so clean,
And all within so happy and so bright.
I would exchange my being, if I might,
With one of these, whose days are so serene,
Whose eve knows no lament, whose morn no blight,
Whose every hour is tranquil in between,
Whose hopes are ever fair, whose joys are ever green.

LXXXVII.

But other bards are present, let them sing
Of such as these; each condescending Muse
Shall teach her fondling how t' awake each string,
And tinge each mouthful with ambrosial hues,
And keep him very well in boots and shoes.
Here some dwarfed harmless poetaster rhymes
Whose very name gives list'ning fools the "blues,"
Not only here, alas in other climes,
Which must not be, of course, in these prolific times.

LXXXVIII.

There's Francis Palgrave, there's Rosetti too;
Trill on, ye two, the song of future years,
Move, Palgrave, move, with bosom rent anew,
An audience multitudinous to tears;
Scratch on with quill unwearied and no fears,
The world shall fling thee thy resplendent bays,
For "Popular Opinion" safely steers
His barque upon the river of thy praise.
The stars themselves shall pause to listen to thy lays.

LXXXIX.

The visitors expected smartly drove
Up to the gate, and Julia showed them in,
Dressed in her best (a sickly-looking mauve);
She also wore a most audacious grin,
Which Mistress too was far from favouring,
And it was clear a "lecture" was in store,
Most of us know what that means; for some sin
Many have I myself received before;
Yet nobly the suspense our pleasing Julia bore.

XC.

Full twelve or fifteen minutes had expired,
Before the salutation part was done,
And they, poor chaps, were doubtless very tired,
Quite tired enough, before it had begun.
(Just think of all that distance in the sun!)
As usual, everlasting "hows" and "whens"
And kind inquiries mixed with pretty fun
Were passed from mouth to mouth, which always tends
To show how much our joy on others' joy depends (?).

XCI.

Now Hannah says (who then was busy cooking),
Altho' she must have looked the other way,
That all the three were harmlessly good-looking;
But Hannah always *did* have lots to say,
So the humiliating *sobriquet*
Of "Tattle Tim" was added to her name,
Because of her nonsensical display,
Till little Julia thought it quite a game,
Since there was no one but her silly self to blame.

XCII.

It is, I think, a matter of opinion
What style of face is sweetest to behold,
Whether Malay or Greek or Abyssinian,
Italian I have oftentimes been told:
Malay I think expressionless and cold,
Tho' some admire its sweet simplicity,
But I'll observe, if I may be so bold,
It must be far-fetched eccentricity;
At least I can't discover such felicity.

XCIII.

But really and truly, joking all aside,
One of our friends, the tallest of the three
I think it was, but cannot quite decide,
Was handsome as a man could hope to be,
I only wish that he'd exchanged with me;
Such depth of eye and such a princely frown!
I wish, my friends, that you'd been there to see
His small white hands and his moustache of brown,
Indeed 'twas worth a journey all the way from town.

XCIV.

Down to the hayfield numerous forks were sent,
The ladies took the lighter ones to use,
And all were jovial to a great extent;
The gentlemen related all the news
And cheerfully did everything t' amuse;
When a mischance occurred, picked up the forks,
(What gentlemen I wonder could refuse)
And helped t' unload and pull out all the corks [stalks.
And arranged some ladies' nosegays, cutting off superfluous

XCV.

Then down came Ju, and, with her, Ma and Pa,
To see if they could make the water boil,—
I think the latter smoked a small cigar;
And Ju, in order that she should not soil
The pretty frock she didn't wish to spoil,
Which she had only had a month—not more,
In which she thought she must have looked quite royal,
Put on a spotless apron just before
Unpacking all the china and delicious store.

XCVI.

Upon the grass the damask cloth was laid,
And the repast looked wonderfully nice,
Spread, as I said it would be, in the shade,
With every summer dainty to entice,
Especially the lemonade and ice
(Coffee for those who coffee did prefer),
And Julia, too, was charmingly precise,
(To which it is but justice to refer) [prettier.
Than her sweet smile nought could have been much

XCVII.

From three crossed sticks above a faggot fire
The water-vessel sent they did suspend
As people mostly do, with twisted wire;
Much care and labour too they did expend,
Determined that their visitors should spend
A very merry evening, which they had.
For there was merry-making without end,
And all the company made very glad;
Considering all things, its success was not so bad.

XCVIII.

The host was irresistibly polite;
"Now *do* try this" he pressingly would say,
Until it was a positive delight
To pass your plate and let him have his way;
He proudly scorned the very thought of "Nay;"
The ladies, though they chatted gaily, thought
Of lots and lots of things they'd like to say,
But couldn't then, you know, for they'd been taught
At such a time to smother feelings of the sort.

XCIX.

Pop went the corks, the ladies screamed with fear
And put their handkerchiefs before their face,
Then stuffed their ears so full they couldn't hear
And each one made a terrible grimace,
Begging that to some farther distant place
The bottles should be pointed; then, alas!
All ran away as though they ran a race,
When each had managed to upset her glass
On the corks banging, what a timid little (l)ass!

C.

The ladies, then, with one consent, declared
The gentlemen to be too good by half,
That angels with them could not be compared;
Then everybody had a hearty laugh;
The "charms" indulged in various little chaff
And gave the gentlemen some dreadful "whacks,"
I do not mean with their Papa's old staff
But with their little hands, across their backs,
Observing they deserved quite twice as many smacks.

CI.

Rowland, our handsome friend, pronounced the pies
Of all he ever liked to be the best;
Lionel, too, bespoke the strawberries,
And Gilbert loved the currants, he confessed;
In short, the gathering was the loveliest
Of all the gatherings they had ever known,
And each, of course was proud to be a guest;
The ladies sighed how fast the time had flown;
That they were sorry everybody there did own.

CII.

Then (at the special signal of Mamma)
The labourers came to take some little cheer;
They doffed their hats and shouted thrice "Hurrah!"
When they had polished off a little beer;
But took the treasure while a burning tear,
Unchecked and gentle, trembled on the cheek
And damped the furrows of full many a year,
And fettered up the lips, thankful and meek,
Each rustic bent his toil-worn brow, but could not speak.

CIII.

And each one passed his rough and heavy sleeve
Up to his face, across his briny eye;
What human breast that tears may not relieve?
What cheek that tears can never beautify?
They moved away and sauntered leisurely
Back to their toil, back to their daily bread,
Then homewards. In the evening's streaky sky
The crescent moon gleamed faintly overhead
And whispered that their little ones were hushed in bed.

CIV.

Our friends and visitors withdrew inside
Now they had tossed the hay and had their fill,
And it was proper time they should, beside
The fields were getting positively chill;
The gentlemen sat down and rested till
The gig was ready, and the lamps were lighted,
And pleased they were to chat awhile, but still
It made the journey tedious if benighted;
But they were very glad indeed they'd been invited.

CV.

Then scribbling autographs seemed all the go,
And music took the place of tossing hay,
With various small etcetera, and so
It came about they should not go away
Before they'd promised for another day.
They did at last, but they were very slow,
But if they kept their word I cannot say,
At least, my friends, not yet awhile you know,
I will reserve it for another short canto.

CVI.

Meanwhile the horse was getting slightly frisky,
Impatient quite to trot his homeward road;
Of course our friends must have a glass of whisky,
The frisky horse, the gig, and all be blowed:
As long as they arrived at their abode,
It didn't matter very greatly when,
And all these circumstances only showed
How entertaining were the ladies then,
How pleased the gentleman would be to come again.

CVII.

Next came the starting off and the adieus,
Which lasted just as long, I do believe,
As all the "Hows" and "Whens" and "How d'ye dos"
On their arrival,—no, I don't deceive;
They all took "most unutterable" leave,
And Julia hurried up and held the gate,
For which a florin-piece she did receive,
Then hurried back in quite a frantic state,
Indeed her eyes with very pleasure did dilate.

CVIII.

Now they were all alone, the day was o'er,
The blinds were down and all the shutters closed,
Julia was sent to bolt the garden door,
And all did whatsoe'er they felt disposed;
Mamma, with covered face, lay down and dozed,
Papa and his three daughters played at loo,
It was the nicest pastime they supposed,
I almost think it must have been, don't you?
But everybody wished the day would dawn anew.

CIX.

They went to bed, as weary people must,
Earlier than usual, after having played
Three lovely games at loo, and then discussed
The nice refreshment in the pleasant shade;
And I am sure they must have been repaid
Quite amply for their trouble in the pleasure
Of hearing all the gentlemen had said,
For Dora seemed amused beyond all measure—
(She was the eldest one, you know, and such a treasure!)

CX.

The household said good night to chat and cards,
They were, at least they seemed to be, worn out;
And 'tis the same, I think, with tiny bards,
For they, too, must leave off sometimes, no doubt,
And many folks are happier far without,
For we are but a nuisance at the most,
And I myself am but a lazy lout,
For dallying all my time amongst the host
Of scribbling dolts; but writing verse is not my boast.

CXI.

Good-bye, my friends, for now, I really think,
'Tis time to pause for I have croaked so long,
To lay aside my paper, pen and ink,
And hush the grating measure of my song,
I should not have detained you half so long;
It might have been much better, I'll agree,
It may not have amused you all along,
A poetaster can't do more, you see;
But we'll shake hands upon the subject merrily.

CXII.

I want a rest, I blink, I see some authors,
And laurel wreaths and pens both great and small,
But weirdly mixed with inkpots, cups and saucers,
Floating in air like things ethereal;
How dare such stupid things intrude at all!
There, let me sleep for goodness gracious sake,
I really shall not answer if you call,
I'll finish up my story when I wake;
Hush, hush, my darling, hush, else rest I cannot take.

LINES WRITTEN ON THE FLY-LEAF OF ONE OF THE AUTHOR'S VOLUMES.

Scan not the lines expectant here to find
Words of the great or lines of treble worth,
The noblest labours of some mighty mind
That soars aloft and sways the realms of earth.

Hope not to find grandiloquence or fame
Which strides from east to west, from pole to pole,
These are the whisp'rings of some humbler name,
The warblings of a sympathetic soul.

A soul which beckons to some kindly eye
And longs to drink its every sweetness in,
That blends its every tear, its every sigh,
Take up the lowly words and—look within.

THE TWO NAMES.

I WROTE a name, the name of youth,
Of innocence and grace,
A name that pictured home and truth
Upon a smiling face.

And underneath I wrote my own,
Laborious and slow,
I looked and smiled to see such names
Were met together so.

And yet I know not what it was
That changed my hope to fear,
Which checked my smile, and called instead
A warm and glistening tear,

Which fell—it fell upon the lines
And mingled them in one,
And yet what mystery ordained
That it should so have done?

I found a name beside my own
Upon a forest oak,
The lightning came and severed both
At one refulgent stroke.

Years sped away and I returned,
The tree afar I sighted,
The bark had grown, the gap was closed,
The names were re-united.

And thus it is that sorrow hears
A fellow-sufferer sigh,
And dark misfortune binds them in
Eternal sympathy.

When two fond hearts are crushed and lone,
And both are prone to murmur,
A word of love would close the wound
And re-unite them firmer.

TO A YOUTHFUL FRIEND.

THEY'RE past, all the years of thy boyhood are passed,
And the hopes of thy infancy fall to decay,
Their fantastical visions are swept to the blast
And the bliss of thy paradise hurried away.

Alone in the chamber of dark meditation
I think of the woes that must shortly be thine,
And Mem'ry unbosoms a tearful oblation
As I feel that time robs me of all that is mine.

Oft, oft have I silently stolen beside thee
With the dew on thy bosom, the smile on thy brow,
When, placidly slumbering, thy gaze was denied me,
Nor knew how invaluably precious—till now.

Till now, when disconsolate tear-drops are welling,
And in Friendship's last farewells our fingers are met,
While heart to heart sadly its fondness is telling,
Which, though it may wound, it can never forget.

ANSWER TO AN EPISTLE.

DEAR FRIEND, you request an epistle from me,
In truth I have nothing whatever to say,
But I find it saves noise when I yield to your will,
So I passively take up my pen and obey.

What slight satisfaction this ditty may render
I know not, but hope that the meaningless verse,
May tend to remind you what nonsense the sender,
For want of a story, is bound to rehearse.

Then smile not at me though deserving of censure,
Forgive but the faults of this troublesome lay,
'Twas foolish, I own it, to make such a venture,
Especially when I had nothing to say.

A SATIRE.

When they who idly scribble verse or prose
Address a line or two to friends or foes,
The first to honour, or the last to blame
In terms censorious, I can do the same.
Let those who have a listening ear to lend,
An eye to see, and sense to comprehend,
Permit so small an idler to rehearse
His observations in a dogg'rel verse.
Let him who rules, himself untaught to read,
Who brays his precepts to the fools that heed,
Watch the slow progress of satiric song
And sneer again, as that relentless throng
In Drury Lane, with bullets formed of mire,
Discharge t' appease the rabble's savage ire
At one who bawls his teachings in the street,
Mounted on high with fifties at his feet.
He (for religion) duped so many sages,
And rose from that to gutter scraping wages,

And cleaned the foulest channels of the art,
Dark as the demon terrors of his heart,
Whom from the curse of tap-rooms now we find
As lame in body as he was in mind.
Next, cynic, tyrant, bandit, what you please,
Floats with the multitude and sins at ease,
Soon sternly sways the ruthless rod of rule
And drills his morals into all his school;
Then bribes his enemies to hide his shame,
The multifarious evils of his name,
With a smile to veil the tremors of his thought,
A kiss to keep the secret he has taught.
See how grim Fear alarms thy every hour
Thou snake of slander and thou mite of pow'r,
While Innocence flies from thy dread retreat
And loathing followers cringe about thy feet,
Who, as they flatter, curse thee to the core,
Sneer when they smile, and hate while they adore.
Oh! fool of fools, soar to the starry skies,
And awe believers with thy saintly cries,
Then, with thy gaze turned heav'nward, faintly pray
For all who sin until thy locks be grey;
Fall on thy knees as thou art wont to kneel
While list'ners doze throughout thy long appeal,

Which over, smile, pre-eminently blest,
A saint indeed, tho' who could such have guessed?
When youth or age are wanting what they should
Possess in duty, help them to be good,
For, truth is truth, the world's statistics show
If aught is good (?) that thou hast made it so.
Confessor, Prophet, Preacher, all in one,
Most righteous libertine beneath the sun;
See how thou grovellest in thy grinding greed
While all thy kinsfolk scoff at all thy need;
So base by nature too, a slave thou art
To all that can defile the human heart.
Object of guilt, thy pow'r of thought decayed
Except the hope to ruin or degrade,
Except the wish to injure or despise,
Wreck reputation in another's eyes,
Go, with thy reptile poison, lick again
The gutter's filth to feed thy pigmy brain.
Away, foul fiend, may each remorseful thought
Scorch up thy withered frame, as thou hast sought
To wither others; may thy every bone
Teach thee what wretchedness shall be thine own,
And show thee how, thou outcast shameless elf,
To look within and shudder at thyself.

A DYING CHILD ON CHRISTMAS EVE.

"THERE are faces in the fire, mother,
Faces that I know,
New ones keep on coming, mother,
When the old ones go, the old ones go,
Look! look!"

"I see no face, my darling boy,
There are no faces there."
"Yes, mother, some look full of joy,
Some sad, and some seem fair, and some seem fair—
Look! look!

"Yes, there are trees and houses, too,
And palaces I see;
I thought just now that I saw you
And you did smile at me, did smile at me—
Look! look!

"And as they come, one after one,
I see them move away,
And some seem full of frolic and fun,
But some seem old and grey, seem old and grey—
Look! look!

"They nod to one another, too,
And have a lot to say,
And then their journey they renew,
As though they must not stay, they must not stay—
Look! look!

"And see the shadows at our back
Upon the parlour wall;
There's mother, baby, Bill and Jack,
And father, too, and all, father, too, and all—
Look! look!

"I hear the sweet soft Christmas chimes,
The carol and the glee;
Mother, I think that oftentimes
They seem to call to me, the pæans call to me—
Hark! hark!

"But we are here, and all around
The dancing shadows play;
Now they are list'ning to the sound,
But there is one away, there is one far away!
Yes! yes!

"Why cry so, mother darling, why?
There is no harm to fear;
I cannot bear to hear you sigh,
To see you drop a tear; why weep so, mother dear,
Why? why?

"The ivy-branches slowly beat
Upon the cottage door,
They ask, shall we thus ever meet [more?
Around the fire once more, in a happy gath'ring
Listen! listen!

"The snow lies deep upon the ground,
And Christmas bells are ringing,
And hearts are grateful for the sound, [singing
And all the world is singing, and all the world is
For joy!"

ALI BUIYAH.

A HUNDRED domes of light
Rose through the sultry air,
And breathed upon the night
Their perfumed purple glare.

And Shiraz halls were gay
With wine and song and dance;
The whirling throngs sweep on,
Now pause, and now advance.

Now all again is still,
And Ali Buiyah falls
Upon his ruby couch
Within those porphyry walls.

But rest is not for him
Though silence reigns around;
He sees again, and thrice,
The serpent on the ground.

Thrice writhe itself abroad,
Thrice hide itself away
Deep in some crannied nook
Beyond the light of day.

Beside the reptile's nest
A mighty chest of old,
Deep in the earth, and, lo,
A countless heap of gold!

Arm! with thy wealth appal
The pride of earthly kings;
Their tott'ring thrones shall quake
Before thy mighty wings!

Three brothers may be said to be the founders of the Dilemi dynasty. When Ali Buiyah, the elder brother, had driven Yakút, the Khaliph's lieutenant, from the province of Fars, he took possession of the governor's palace in Shirâz. One day, reclining on a couch in the palace, he saw a snake more than once show its head through a crevice in the wall, and then retire. Resolved to remove so dangerous an inmate, he ordered that part of the wall to be thrown down; the workmen had not advanced far when they discovered a secret closet containing all the treasures that the avaricious Yakût had accumulated while governor of Shirâz. With the assistance of the money thus obtained, the Buiyahs marched against Bagdad, captured the city, made the Khaliph prisoner, and deprived him of all temporal power.

STANZAS TO A FRIEND.

ADIEU, dear Friend, once more adieu,
Nor let me linger at thy side;
Each moment cuts the heart anew,
And tears of parting who can hide?

My eye, oft wand'ring o'er the plain,
Along the stream and o'er the hill,
Shall teach my breast how deep the pain,
The pain that time can never kill.

And there my heart shall rest with thee,
Though absent long and far away,
Forgetfulness can never be
Though youth be age and age be grey.

And though the world perchance appear
To smile upon the hopes of youth;
Its hope 's a cheat, its smile a sneer,
Its ways are hideous to the truth.

Deceit and Folly linger there,
And who may shield thee, who defend?
We all are fools consigned to care,
And who—ah! who—can boast a friend?

Away with such a paltry thought!
For who this virtue e'er possess?
So much professed, yet vainly sought,
I scorn a word so meaningless!

'Tis even now when leaves are budding,
Tis even now when flowers are gay,
And happy dreams thy soul are flooding
That evil leads the heart away.

What is the world? what are its tenants?
See mock'ry all their pangs await;
A tale of woe, of sin and penance,
The world—a hell of scorn and hate!

Ah! what an insect every creature,
Our very life a funeral pall,
Though all the earth be turning preacher,
With nothing good amongst them all!

Then why expect a path of smiles
Since there is none in whom to trust;
For all who see its mazy wiles
Must turn away in mute disgust.

TEARS.

How sweet it is to gaze on soft grey eyes,
Sweeter than this what can there be below,
When tears, like pearly rain, those orbs baptize
And speak a world, a universe of woe?

How sweet to linger o'er and fondly press
With melting lips the rising mist aside,
And watch the depths of tender loveliness
Before the fountain of its grief is dried!

Oh! what are tears, the essence of a soul
Bleeding in silent anguish, thrice distilled;
Who shall relieve though thousands may condole;
How shall the aching pulse of pain be stilled?

How sweet to softly steal and catch the gleam
Of nameless griefs, for grief itself is fair,
While thoughts unsearchable glide like a dream,
And know what heaven is like—for heaven is there.

Though every tear be as the murderer's knife
Cutting with deadly earnestness the breast;
Yet grief is solace when it views a life
Of tears so beautiful, so dearly blest.

Repress the flood with kisses, and the tide
Will hush like tiny wavelets at their play,
Sleepily sinking to the ocean wide;
And with a tear wash other tears away.

BERWICK.

Berwick, thou home of contentment and gladness,
Sequestered and lovely, what sweetness is thine;
Dispelling all thought, all remembrance of sadness,
Where beauty and cheerfulness fondly combine!

I love to behold thee, if e'en from afar,
For thy shade is the calm of a trouble-tost sea,
Thy light—'tis the ray of the eventide star,
Thy pastures, thy groves are Elysium to me!

The circle of friendship is thine, and the while
Of beaming delights and enlivening chat,
And thy music of mirthfulness summons the smile,
Oh, what is there half as delightful as that!

Thy fireside is peace, and enjoyment thy strain,
Thy moments the moments of infinite glee,
I sing to thy praises again and again,
The ball room, the palace, what are they to thee!

What hill-sides so pleasant, what pastures so green,
What waters so limpid as those trickling by,
And streaking with silver the velvet-like scene?
Other beauties with thee are unable to vie!

There, rising above thee, colossal and stern,
Is the Beacon of Firle in its warrior-like pride;
And delightedly wand'ring the eye can discern
The billows of ocean, a purple-stained tide.

Here the Giant of Wilmington towers aloft,
And ten thousand broad acres stretch inland and sweep
To the distant horizon, now mellowed and soft,
While Nature's low lullabies dwindle to sleep.

Thy hearth is so merry, thy children so bright,
Thy pleasure so bounteous, so harmless to share,
Thy intercourse homely, thine all is so light,
And wherefore? the soul of enjoyment is there!

The evening is closing upon thee, and dim
Are the shadows which lighten the weight of thy woes
And, tenderly stealing, the lingering hymn
Is hushing thy mortals to Sabbath repose.

Oh, fain would I be or the peasant or swain
Who fondles his fav'rite, the pride of his team,
To drink in thy sweetnesses over again,
Thou spot of enchantment, thou land of a dream!

Adieu! but for now may it be, not for ever,
Thy pleasures it ne'er shall be mine to forget;
Alas, must it be that, in spite of endeavour,
We mingle our joys with a pang of regret!

THE SHEPHERD TO HIS REED.

THOU'RT silent, my reed, and thy song is departed,
The spell that hung formerly o'er thee is flown,
And the breast that has prompted thee bleeds broken-hearted,
The bosom that loved thee is crushed and—alone!

No longer enticing thy fanciful numbers,
An effortless finger must tune thee in vain
For the sweetness that lulled to such exquisite slumbers;
How shall I, my beauty, uplift thee again?

Oh, when will the note that delighteth awaken
Those trembling reflections that held me before?
The hand that has cherished thee now is forsaken,
Affection shall weep to thy strain nevermore.

Adieu, then, my reed, and the joys that surround thee,
No more can I lisp to thy lingering lay,
For the bliss that but yesterday hovered around thee
Has withered to fragments and drifted away!

MUSIC.

You ask what is Music, but what is the beat
Of the thousands, when marshalled, who tread to the drum,
Who thrill with emotion while loving to greet
The note of the national song as they come?

Oh what is the varied, the lively pulsation
Of feet that are nimble which momently sway
To the song of the bosom of light animation;
Which come and as speedily hurry away?

But the note of the orchestra cannot campare
With the warblings of Nature that carry beyond,
For Nature is musical everywhere;
Who is there to whom she can never respond?

Oh what is the pæan, oh what is the peal,
The peal that is muffled and rung for the grave,
The voice of the songster for all who can feel,
The blast of the tempest, the roar of the wave?

What, what do the wavelets say in the blue river?
In these there is language, there's music for me,
As hurrying onward for ever and ever
They ripple, they ripple away to the sea.

When breezes are fanning by moonlight the waters,
Oh what is the breath of the maidenly sigh,
When the sweetest, the best of Eve's loveliest daughters
Is bidding her loved one a fond good-bye?

Oh what is the dirge that by midnight is flowing
Through wood and by waterfall, over the lea?
A strain that is constantly coming and going,
The zephyrs, the zephyrs are singing to me!

The music of heaven is whispering too,
There's a voice in the stars as they silently roll,
And the bountiful seasons revolving anew
All join in the music of love for the soul.

NIGHTFALL.

THE haze of the evening envelopes the town,
The sun overcast in faint crimson is sinking,
And drear are the shadows far, far away down,
And Nature is drowsily blinking.

The mist, like a shroud, trembles sadly above
Fantastical towers now purpled and dim,
Like far-away echoes of dreamland and love
Or the close of a tearful hymn.

Dark, dark is the river, like mystery blending
With deeds that are red or with hearts that are lone,
Slow and black through the chasm its waters are wending
Like terror expressed by a groan.

And grim stand the gables against the gray light,
The tottering chimneys are smothered in gloom,
And, dismal and ghostly, they hush in affright
Like mourners are hushed at the tomb.

Like a funeral torch is the distant glimmer
That flickers again from the silent den,
Now moving, now motionless, brighter, then dimmer,
Like the phantom that floats o'er the fen.

And the interval-bell is the dirge of a soul
That has stolen away from a world of wrong,
From an ocean where ceaselessly troubles roll
To a mansion of endless song.

Ah hush, for a body is found on the bank
Of the filthy stream as it gurgles by,
With fingers clenched, while foul and dank
Are the odours that hover nigh !

And the gaunt gray hills look shadowy and bleak,
They mark the struggle and murderer's knife,
And peer with the pallor of shame on their cheek
And frown over passion and strife.

They pause and they shudder to see the sight,
  Iniquity's channels and deadly hate,
And horrible crimes that swarm in the night
  While hideous alarms await.

And the marsh is dark and the moor is wide,
  Sullen yet sad is the occident gleam,
And the yawning bed of the ebbing tide
  Is like to the horrors of a dream.

TO A LADY,

ON ENQUIRING AS TO MY INTENTIONS WITH REGARD TO THE FUTURE.

You ask what my future is destined to be,
But how shall I answer you? wherefore ask me?
'Tis the riddle to be shown in the years yet to come,
My Penates are sleeping, my oracles dumb.

For blindfold Fortuna is straying afar,
And I really can't find my particular star,
If I could, not a snap of the thumb should you wait,
You should instantly learn the caprices of Fate.

Now could I but find them and claim them my own,
The Elixir of Life and Philosopher's Stone,
Not a single ungratified wish should be mine,
And a bright cornucopia should satisfy thine.

But still, if you wish, I'll declare to you this,
My state would be one of superlative bliss,—
Since you long to unravel the thread of my life,—
If you'd offer yourself for a dear little wife.

WRITTEN ON A LEAF OF A LADY'S ALBUM.

I WRITE, and the word that now drops from my pen
Shall call to remembrance a vision of old,
And the light of the past shall revivify when
The finger that penned it lies deathly and cold.

What eyes may behold it? What breast may respond
To a chord that is trembling, a heart that is jaded,
That faints for a star to illumine beyond,
Alone—with its hope, its tranquillity faded?

Pass on, let another, a worthier than I,
Embalm with a tear or enrich by a smile,
Adorn with the soul of a lingering sigh
Like a streamlet of gold on a glistering isle.

CONVERSATION.

You ask me, dear Sir, why I'm silent and glum ;
Indeed that it is so I cannot deny,
It suits me much better just now to be dumb,
I'll tell you what binds me in silence, and why.

When all in acquaintanceship's circle converse
On themes of the past or political views,
Or discuss whether business is better or worse,
Such topics as these are can always amuse.

And all may enjoy a nice chat if they please
On favourite authors or towns they admire,
And sociably sit with a pipe at their ease
In comfortable lounge with their feet at the fire.

They may argue on things they know nothing about,
Which often enlivens a dull conversation,
And swear that there isn't the ghost of a doubt
Concerning the truth of each one's allegation.

Or all may partake of complaints at the weather
Or venture to speak on the prospects of grain,
Or growing tobacco (like birds of a feather);
Such themes are exhausted again and again.

But then when a member discusses himself
And claims the attention of all that are present,
Inferior topics he lays on the shelf
And confines us to one he considers so pleasant.

Though, while it's a subject none else can command
And of which awing listeners may very soon tire,
Too profound, I pronounced it, to quite understand,
So considered it best to sit still and admire.

THE RING.

Oh take it and tenderly gaze when alone
On the circlet of love and unburden a sigh
For the hand it adorned, e'er it circled thine own,
When that hand is not lingering lovingly by!

Oh stay not the tear-drop that tells of the past,
Full many a tear-drop has bathed it before,
Our hopes are the nothings which, ruthlessly cast
From the bosom of ocean, lay strewn on the shore!

Let the gem be the emblem of hours that are gone,
And the cord that must tighten with every throb
Of the heart that is aching, the first ray of dawn
That calmed the dark tremor and silenced the sob.

May the chain be as golden that binds us in one,
The name be engraven as deep in thy breast,
As lasting the friendship so sweetly begun,
And the hopes that are centred on thee for the best.

Oh gaze at the jewel when trouble is near,
At home or in regions beyond the dark wave;
May its lustre revive and be doubly as dear
When the donor is hushed in the night of the grave.

Think not of his failings though many and great,
Yet tongues may calumniate, foes may belie,
Forgive, and but pity the faults thou must hate,
And mingle his weakness in prayer with a sigh.

His heart is the tumult that boils in the spray,
The barque that ploughs onward unknown to its course,
The dark and reposeless that bounds on its way,
Now blighted with sadness, now crushed with remorse.

What science can fathom the regions of space,
What philosophy follow the systems that roll
Around and around us? yet such is the place
Where ecstasies pour out the song of the soul.

But pause in thy revelry, stay in thy mirth,
And cherish remembrance that lives in the sight
Of a trinket, though worthless, yet dearest on earth,
A trinket that's bathed in such exquisite light.

Oh weep in thy dreams at the vision of him
Who basks in the ray of translucence and bliss;
For the smile ever present can never grow dim;
What pen shall describe such a friendship as this!

ON AN UNSOCIABLE FELLOW.

Now draw up your chair and be social and sprightly;
For Time is but short, therefore laugh while you may,
The ruby wine steams and the hearth blazes brightly,
Let mirth scare the phantom of sorrow away.

For all may contribute his mite and enjoy
The fulness of mirth he assists to ensure,
Then laugh and be merry, once more be a boy,
The jolly old crony I knew you before.

A DREAM OF OLD ST. DUNSTAN'S-IN-THE-WEST.

I DREAMED that along a gay street I was wandering
'Neath signboards of every description and hue,
And, intently observant, was silently pondering
On all the strange creatures presented to view:
What meant all the colours so gay that were blending
With lions and human-faced horses impending
And antelopes couchant, while slow I was wending
My steps to a haven that nobody knew.

The quaint gabled houses, the stony paved street
O'er which the green car jolted hither and fro,
The sign of the "Devil," all told me the Fleet
Was the streamlet that glutted its horrors below;
And the gaunt Temple Bar of the past was surveying
The coach as it rattled beneath, or, waylaying
Some wight of acquaintance, a neighbour delaying
To prove what a gossiping tongue he could show.

The pillory stood in the midst; an offender,
The great Titus Oates, trembling, pale-faced and wan,
And mocked by, perchance, each young merciless vendor
And cruelly smitten, was fastened thereon;

While the criminal spikes of the barrier were warning
The multitudes motley that thronged night and morning
Through the time-honoured portal from dawning to dawning
Ere the victims of bloodshed and judgment were gone.

But whilst I was wondering whatever the meaning
Of the old-fashioned sights thus around me should be
And on an old side-post was carelessly leaning,
I glanced at the clock of St. Dunstan's to see
How long should elapse before night would be falling,
And shadows that momently lengthen be crawling
Around the drear dwellings their inmates recalling,
Although there was not a home open to me.

But a moment had scarcely transpired when, brown
From a niche in the wall where the bell had hung,
The figures of Dunstan's stepped noiselessly down,—
The figures that tolled out the song it had sung
Like a wail from a breast that is sad and forsaken,
As if it would sympathy softly awaken,
By unquenchable grief and despair overtaken,
And crave a response from the grim old town.

They mutely approached with batons at their side
And, mysteriously pointing, directed my gaze
To a cloud overhanging the Thames' sluggish tide,
Like evil foreboders of woe-begone days;
And, forward impelled by some undefined power,
I followed their footsteps, while swift from the Tower
Came darkness and storm with the evening hour,
Down echoless streets interwound like a maze.

And now it was dark: to the Temple Stairs
We silently hurried; the wavelets bore,
Like divine benediction removing our cares,
The feathery mosses away from the shore;
First boldly advancing, then cautious retreating,
Their gloomy, monotonous ditty repeating,
Then hastening onwards like souls ever-fleeting
And leaving the stairs as they had been before.

But, suddenly turning, what sight did I see
With countenance ghastly and eyes as of steel;
I tremble to picture its glance upon me,
Oh Mercy above! 'twas the Spectre of Peel!
A garment of white like a grave-shroud did drape her,
And the dew on my cheek stood a cold deathly vapour,
As she fastened her clutch round her flickering taper;
At her feet the two figures of Dunstan's did kneel.

And, wafting them onwards, she drew to her side
The boat at the staircase and bade them steer;
I entered, she followed, as if for a guide
To mid-stream, and, beholding, I trembled with fear
Like the pendulous waters that shimmered around me,
A horrible silence sepulchral-like bound me,
The mysterious shadows did nought but astound me,
Oh terror too deep to unbosom a tear!

Now dim were the lights on the shore, and the stream,
Whose surface seemed peopled with beings of air,
Though black, was illumed by the parchment-like gleam,
And the pallor of death lingered everywhere.

The phantom, with lank bloody hand unconcealing
The murderer's gash, whence the life-blood was stealing,
Baptized in deep crimson, beyond human healing,
  Lashed the wave on her bosom all icy and bare.

But scarce had the livid intruder addressed me
  With a message of gloom from the shades of the dead,
While a dark indescribable terror possessed me,
  When, with both their batons lifted high overhead,
The figures with horrible menace were leaping,
Beside me, as though they would murder me creeping
Like a dog at their feet and beseechingly weeping,
  A painful admixture of wonder and dread.

But slow and distinct o'er the paralyzed river
  Pealed the hour from St. Magnus afar in the east,
While through me there ran an involunt'ry shiver,
  And they staggered aghast e'er the chimes had ceased;
And hastily rising I clutched the baton
As it wavered above, but the figures were gone;
And the clanging belfries' melancholy song
  Was like to the monotone chant of a priest.

They fled, and the weapon was left in my hand,
  I convulsively clutched it, but, lo—— I awoke!
And I felt the bright beams of a happier land
  While reclining beneath the broad shade of an oak,
And found myself grasping the rustic seat.
The tea-bell ringing, I sprang to my feet;
Thus ended my dream in a summer-day's heat,
  The dream of St. Dunstan's beneath the green oak.